

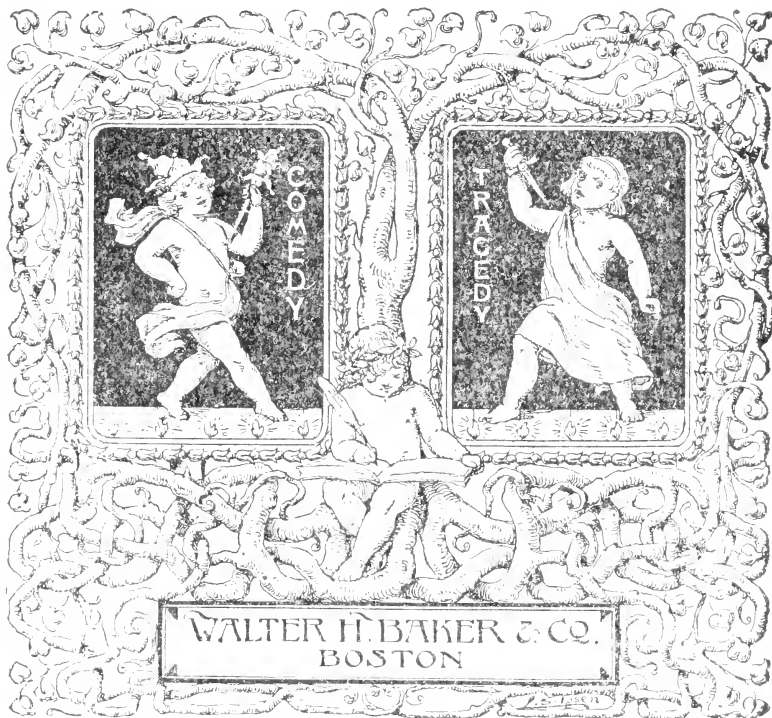
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# KID CURLERS

A Farce in One Act

By

DOROTHY WALDO

*Author of "A Full House," "Sylvia's Aunts," etc.*



BOSTON  
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1916

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# Kid Curlers

## CHARACTERS

THE WIDOW MORIARITY, *a neat, uneducated boarding-house keeper, preferably about forty.*

MIKE O'BRIEN, *a rather flashily dressed Irishman.*

JONAS PINCH, *an old and eccentric bachelor.*

AMANDA GULL, *a vain old maid, whose hair is always kept curled.*

TIME OF PLAYING.—About twenty-five minutes.

## PROPERTIES

A laundry check, a set of kid hair curlers, a whiskey flask, an umbrella, some candles, a doily for a chair back.



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# Kid Curlers

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SCENE.—*An ordinary sitting-room in a boarding-house. Mantel or table, stage R., with various ornaments and small boxes on it. Door, stage C. or L., and another, stage R.*

(THE WIDOW MORIARITY and MIKE O'BRIEN are discovered talking, as the curtain rises.)

WIDOW. Oh, but Mike! To think of the disgrace of it! A stiddy, nice, respectable boarding-house like mine! A pest of rats! Why, there ain't been a pest of any kind o' vermin in this house since Moriarity himself died, seven years ago come April!

O'BRIEN. How about the boarders, Norah?

WIDOW (*who has no sense of humor*). Oh, I don't note them. Them is necessary pests, like twenty-two-cent eggs. They will give trouble, but it's them or nothing. But rats! Oh, warra! warra!

O'BRIEN. There, there, Norah, sweetheart, you take on just like your Mike wasn't the forninstist man in his profession. What for have I been at it twenty-five years, in the homes of the first families, if I can't help you and thim rats out of their holes together? By the way, have you seen me new business cards? (*He takes card out of pocket, and reads, then hands it to the WIDOW.*) "Michael John O'Brien, R. R. Orders solicited. Call and inspect our work"

WIDOW. It's fine printing. But whatever is R. R.?

O'BRIEN. Oh, that's like all professional men. They call that a degree. You know how they have "M. D." standing for "Murdering Doctor." Well, a feller got this out of a book for me: R. R.—Rodent Reducer. It works great. When I was just Mike O'Brien, Rat Killer, I got five dollars a job; but since I took my degree, I get twenty-five easy.

WIDOW. Oh, but goodness, Mike, I can never pay you that for killing the nasty things.

O'BRIEN. That's all right, my colleen. I've a scheme to make the landlord foot that bill. Not but what I hope to get something out of it. How about it, Norah? Seven year come April, I been a-ferreting out your tracks; sitting at the hole waiting for you to come out into the bag. Come, now, if I see that every last rat dies out of the house, will you see that I die in the house as Mrs. Mike O'Brien's second best?

WIDOW. Mike O'Brien, how you talk! But you get rid of 'em, and I'll be considering. Mind, though, not a word of this to the boarders. There's that Amanda Gull, second floor front, steady pay, small eater, no callers, is terrified o' rats. If she knew I had 'em, she'd leave quicker'n scat. She really oughtn't to know you're here, let alone what for.

O'BRIEN. But what if she sees me?

WIDOW. Tell her you're a plumber. You'll have to think up something to tell old Jonas Pinch, anyway. He'll be poking his nose into this business, sure. He'll *say* he's looking for spies. Spies! Huh! When it comes to spying out things, he can give them furriners trumps, and beat 'em.

O'BRIEN. Well, it being down cellar, I'll keep it dark. Ha! ha! Pretty good. I'm just going out to get my kit, and I'll begin to-night. I guess I'll make out I dunno you at all.

WIDOW. Oh, I hope you can do it!

O'BRIEN (*rising to go*). Sure I can! Oh, and I tell you what I'll do. I'll just slip up here to-night when I'm through, and put a note on the mantel, to tell you how I get along. You'll find it here first thing when you come in the morning. It means a lot to me, Norah.

WIDOW. Oh, go on with you. Better take the back-door key. Oh, and Mike, will you leave this bundle of laundry up to the Chinaman's when you go by? I do hate to go there, for I'm certain that's where them rats come from.

O'BRIEN. Oh, no, Norah. They eat 'em. They wouldn't be letting any of them go. [*Exit.*]

WIDOW. Let me see. What's the news? (*She picks up a paper.*) Plopstock. That's a funny word. I bet nobody knows what that is. Fine! A good name for the menu! Hash à la Plopstock!

*Enter* JONAS PINCH, *his pockets filled with papers.*

PINCH. Evening, Mrs. Moriarity. Reading the dreadful news? Terrible! Terrible! I don't know what we're coming to!

WIDOW. What's so terrible?

PINCH. The Japanese situation, madame, the Japanese situation. At any moment this country may be bombarded and overwhelmed by that nefarious nation. Their secret service, madame, knows every ship in our navy, every gun in our forts, every rat hole in our cellars!

WIDOW. Oh! Do they, now! What for will they want to be prying into private business that-away?

PINCH (*growing more and more excited*). My dear madame, we are surrounded by cordons of spies. Why, at this very moment I am engaged in organizing an institution, of which, I may state, I am first president, to be the Institute for the Inquisition of Inquisitive Inquirers. Here are the papers—here. (*Takes bundles of papers from his pockets.*) Madame, this society will have for its object the banishing of every valet, every cook, every laundryman of——

WIDOW (*interrupting*). But them ain't Japs; them is Chinks.

PINCH. There is no difference. The slanting eye, the sleek, straight hair, are the betraying characteristics of the race. How unlike the lovely curls about the face of your Miss Amanda Gull. Madame, note my celluloid collar. Why? Once, madame, unobserved, I beheld a yellow laundryman at work. He was squirting the poison of his lips over unsuspecting bosoms! Should I don such a shirt, I should die in agony, of jaundice, or some other disease peculiar to the yellow race!

(*As he ceases, MISS AMANDA GULL enters.*)

MISS G. Oh, Mr. Pinch! How overwhelming! But you would protect us. You are so chilvarous.

WIDOW. Huh!

(*She sniffs, and goes out, unobserved by the others.*)

PINCH (*gallantly*). Miss Gull, my every effort would be to save those lovely curly locks from destruction.

MISS G. I knew you would! You know, the minute I saw you, I said, "There's a virulent man." If there's anything I admire, it is a virulent man.

PINCH. Madame, my virility is yours. But about these spies——

MISS G. Oh, spies! I don't think of them. The government can compress them at any time.

PINCH. But, madame——

MISS G. (*not heeding him*). Now, what I am afraid of is rats. Somebody told me they were carvinorous beasts. It seems so awful to be carvinorous!

PINCH (*still fussing over papers*). But ——

MISS G. And drinking! I have been so terrified for fear I might be pursued by an intocisated invidual!

PINCH (*interrupting desperately*). Miss Amanda, there are no rats here. I may also confide in you that I am the president of the Institution for Inhibiting Intoxication. But ——

MISS G. (*simpering*). Then you are a teetotaller, too?

PINCH. Well —— But, Miss Gull, our danger lies in the Japanese invasion. We never know when a bomb may send us all in pieces over the universe. Now, even this very evening I saw a most suspicious character lurking about here.

MISS G. Oh, I saw him, too. He wasn't a Japanese. He was quite evidently Irish.

PINCH. My dear young lady, that's the diabolical part of it. Those races can assume *any* disguise at any moment.

MISS G. Oh!

PINCH. But we will be watchful! It may take all my ingenuity to ferret out what that person was doing here, but ——

MISS G. Oh—have you much inniguity?

PINCH (*ignoring her*). Now, here is a phonography record which contains a Chinese song. You must get some idea of the Asiatic voice.

MISS G. Oh, do play it. I just love a graphamoan.

*Enter the WIDOW, significantly.*

WIDOW. Good-night, Miss Gull and Mr. Pinch. When you are going up-stairs, will you be so good as to turn the gas out entirely? I think I'll not be sitting up any longer. [*Exit.*

MISS G. I—I—suppose she wants to innisuate that we had better be going up, too. Bon jour, Mr. Pinch.

PINCH (*who has been absorbed in the Victrola*). Oh—er—good-night, Miss Gull. Remember—on the watch! We can't have those lovely curls harmed!

*(They exit singly, turning light low.)*

O'BRIEN (*entering immediately with a piece of cheese and a small bag in his hand*). Well, I thought the cheese would melt in my fingers, waiting for them to go. I never hoped to get a chance to stuff up the holes in here. Nuts, them two are. Cracked nuts! Not any meat on 'em, either. Ain't she



daffy on him though! Well—here's the old lady's laundry check. I'll put it here on the mantel. (*Puts check on the mantel, then moves around the room, stuffing up the holes with bits of glass from his bag. Also breaks off a piece of cheese every once in a while, and nibbles on it till the cheese is all gone.*) Huh! Don't wonder the boarders didn't want this cheese. Doubt if any self-respecting rat would bother to eat it. Not much of it, anyway. . . . All I really need is enough to make a trail into the kitchen. (*He sniffs at his fingers.*) Huh! Might just draw my fingers along the carpet. (*Finishes eating last bit of cheese.*) Well, that hole is stopped up. Now for the cellar!

(*He exits as PINCH enters in a bathrobe, with glass and whiskey flask and candle.*)

PINCH. I really didn't *tell* her I was a teetotaller. Anyway, I don't drink. I just sip, for strength in moments of stress. Other men make a vice of it; not I, not I. Now, a little hot water from the kitchen kettle; a wee bit of sugar; and—and — (*He goes out into the kitchen.*)

*Enter Miss G. She is also in a bathrobe, candle in hand. Her hair is very conspicuously tied up in kid hair curlers.*

MISS G. I was sure I heard a noise. He told me to watch. I will be brave.

(*She peers about in corners of room. As she does so, PINCH appears in kitchen doorway, rubbing his stomach and speaking to himself audibly.*)

PINCH. Ah-h-h-h! That was a fine little nightcap.

(*The two discover each other simultaneously. Miss G. squeaks, and PINCH dodges back into kitchen with flask.*)

MISS G. Oh, please, Mr. Pinch, wait a minute, just a minute. (*She rushes to C., tearing off the kid hair curlers and puts them hastily into a box on the mantel.*) Oh! How horrible! And he did so admire my beautiful hair. I really began to have some hope! (*She seizes a doily, which has been draped on the back of a chair, and hastily pins it on her head like a boudoir cap.*) Did you say you had—say something about a nightcap, Mr. Pinch? Curious; I was just arranging mine;

only we call ours boudoir caps. You will pardon my debashille, I know. Can I help you find your nightcap?

PINCH (*much embarrassed*). Why, no, Miss Gull, I—er—er—I think I know where it is; er—er—I am sure I know where it is. I see you discovered yours—er—er—very lovely with those graceful tendrils curling from beneath it. But I won't detain you—er—good-night—— My Heavens! What is that?

*(As he edges past the mantel, he discovers the laundry check, and points at it in horror.)*

Miss G. (*aside*). The kid curlers! (*To him.*) Oh—oh—don't go near them!

PINCH. Woman! In my position, I must! (*He picks up the pink laundry check.*) Do you know what this is?

Miss G. (*much relieved*). Oh, that! (*Giggles.*) It looks like a game of tic-tac-toe!

PINCH. That is Japanese script! I knew it! That suspicious character I saw here this afternoon! A secret note left at midnight for a confederate in the house! There must be a conspirator here!

Miss G. (*timidly*). Yes, I saw it.

PINCH. It? What? Where?

Miss G. The cuspirator. It's in the smoking-room.

PINCH. I mean a *man*. But let me investigate still further. (*He looks in box on mantel while Miss G. titters about, hesitating to stop him.*) Merciful Powers! What have we here? (*He lifts the kid curlers, one at a time, gingerly from the box.*) Do you know what these are?

Miss G. Tee hee! Tee hee!

PINCH. To laugh in the face of death! The fuses of bombs! I see it now! An inside job, to blow us up. Be brave, Miss Gull, be brave.

Miss G. (*burying face in hands in hysterical laughter; he thinks her overcome*). He-he-he-he-he!

PINCH. You really must be brave! I will just secrete these upon my person for evidence. Let us hide here, and when the scoundrel enters, confound him, I shall have some practical gift to make to the society. I haven't my glasses here. Will you examine this slip more closely?

Miss G. There's some writing on the back.

PINCH. I knew it. Read it!

MISS G. First it's Wid. M-o-r —

PINCH. The Widow Moriarity, yes—yes.

MISS G. Then there's a three, and an m, I think it is; and a word beginning with g. G-n-s —

PINCH. Horrors upon horrors! Three machine guns!

MISS G. And then four c-o-l —

PINCH. Powers of Darkness! Attacking in four columns!

MISS G. And then forty c-e-n-t —

PINCH. Forty centimeter guns! The deadliest weapon made. This is no petty plot! This is an invasion in force! We must expose it! We must warn the government!

MISS G. Sh-sh! I hear something—up-stairs.

PINCH. Quick! This way! Out under the stairs and hide.

*(Exeunt stage, R. or L., as O'BRIEN enters from kitchen door with PINCH's whiskey flask in his hand.)*

O'BRIEN. Now, who do you s'pose left that a-layin' tasty and temptin' on the kitchen table? It smells like it were full o' the creature! It *is* full o' the creature! But no taste on duty is the rule of Mike O'Brien. I want to leave a note for the old girl, for I'll be going home now in a hour or two, with me job all done. *(He scribbles a note and puts it on the mantel.)* Hullo! She took the laundry check. I thought she'd be abed long before I brought it in!

*(Exit as PINCH and MISS G. back in slowly, hand in hand, watching something approach.)*

MISS G. It—it—it seems to be coming. *Do* you suppose it is carvinorous?

PINCH. Probably—but I will p-p-protect you. I will protect you—I w-w — Oh! *You!*

*(The WIDOW enters in absurd dignity. A hideous night-cap is over her head, a blanket over her shoulder. In her hand she carries a stout umbrella. In the candle light she is grotesque.)*

WIDOW. I thought I heard sounds as didn't belong in no boarding-house. Mr. Pinch, you have always passed for a gentleman. What'll you say?

PINCH. Madaine, we were engaged in —

WIDOW. I don't care if you *was* engaged. Are you engaged *now*?

PINCH. Madame, I was about to propose that —

WIDOW. Well, I think you'd better propose now without no beating about to it, and Miss Gull better accept you, too. Either that, or move out in the morning.

MISS G. Oh, Mrs. Moriarity, this is so sudden!

PINCH. Miss Gull, let us satisfy Mrs. Moriarity.

MISS G. Oh, Jonas! Jonas! Joney!

PINCH. It will make no difference, since we shall all be dead in the morning, anyway!

WIDOW. What do you mean, you old scoundrel?

MISS G. Madame! You are addressing my fiancé.

PINCH. Briefly, madame, this house is the center of a Japanese plot. I have already intercepted a note in cipher, and the fuses for several bombs.

WIDOW. What? Where?

PINCH. Here. On the mantel. (*Steps to the mantel.*) By all that's evil! Here's another note! Where could it have come from? This quite un-nerves me!

MISS G. Read it, if you can. Quick!

PINCH (*opening note and staring; then reading*). "Everything going fine. All dead by morning sure." By morning. Eight more hours of life!

WIDOW. Look a-here. That don't mean us. That means — (*Breaks off suddenly, as she realizes* MISS G. *Aside.*) Oh, lor! Miss Amanda. Rats!

PINCH. Amanda, if I cannot save us —

(*They talk together.*)

WIDOW (*down stage, L.*). Here's where I find out whether Mike O'Brien is worth his salt. (*Back stage, R.*) Mr. and Missus, I know for sure those aren't us. Now, there's a friend of mine, a plumber, a-working in the cellar —

PINCH. Now? Very suspicious.

MISS G. Why should he be working this time of night?

WIDOW (*icily*). It might be because the water had to be turned off, and this is the only time night or day that the boarders aren't breaking the rule about light laundry work and shaving in the bath room.

PINCH. But he might be a plumber and a spy also. They often are.

WIDOW. Don't fret yourself. If he was a plumber he'd be

a robber, too; they always are. But Mike O'Brien ain't a murderer of human beings. I'll have him up.

[*Exit, via kitchen door.*]

PINCH. Amanda, my love, I think I will procure my gun. Preparedness, you know. You do not fear to wait, I know.

[*Exit stage, R. or L.*]

*Enter WIDOW and O'BRIEN.*

O'BRIEN (*to WIDOW*). 'Tis best to tell the truth in moderation, in moderation.

WIDOW. As ye think best, Mike, as ye think best. Miss Gull, can I make you acquainted with my friend, Mr. O'Brien?

O'BRIEN. 'Tis a charmed man I am, Miss Gull. The widder is tellin' me you are choosin' a suitor from the beggin' hundreds at your feet.

MISS G. Yes, Mr. O'Brien, I am.

O'BRIEN. Well, miss, you'll excuse me if I come to business right away. I am a pest exterminator. You will need to consult me if you marry Mr. Pinch.

MISS G. I—I don't understand you.

O'BRIEN. Well, let's take this house. Now, all houses have pests of some sort. Let's say this is—is centipedes. Yes, centipedes. I come in. I work a few hours quiet like. Whiff! there ain't a centipede in ten miles.

MISS G. Oh, how awful! How lovely of you. (*Faintly.*) Are—are cepentides carvinorous?

O'BRIEN. Huh? Oh, no, they have eight legs.

MISS G. Oh, and *do* tell me, if you are an excerpt on pests. Are rats carvinorous?

O'BRIEN. Why, bless your heart, miss, I been workin' among 'em for fifteen years, and I never see one carvin' yet.

MISS G. What a relief. And that note indicated cepentides?

O'BRIEN. It did, miss. And the pink slip was a laundry check. I dunno about them things the widow calls fuses.

MISS G. Oh, but I do. Mr. O'Brien, those were some pernosal property of mine. Oh, *very* pernosal. I must get them back. You see, they were made to order, and—and I can't get any more like them.

O'BRIEN. Well, ask Mr. Pinch for 'em.

MISS G. Oh! I can't! He mustn't know they were mine! Won't you get them back?

O'BRIEN. Well, I dunno. I don't see how I can!—Yes, I do, by gum! I'll get 'em for you! You and the widow clean out and let me talk to him.

MISS G. Oh, thank you, my perverser!

[*They exeunt as PINCH enters.*]

PINCH. Well, sir, are you a plumber?

O'BRIEN. No, I aren't.

PINCH. I knew it. What are you?

O'BRIEN. A rodent reducer.

PINCH. A what?

O'BRIEN. Rodent reducer. Rat killer. I put that note on the mantel to tell the widder, who I may say I hope won't long be a widder, how I was getting along on the job. Them rats not only will be dead by morning, but they is dead now.

PINCH. Preposterous! You think to blind me by glib explanations. Explain this if you can, and the directions on the back.

(*He holds out laundry check.*)

O'BRIEN. That's a laundry check.

PINCH. Nonsense!

O'BRIEN. What's the list?

PINCH. Three m-g-n-s. Three machine guns.

O'BRIEN. That ain't an m; it's an n. Three night-gowns.

PINCH. Oh!

O'BRIEN. Next?

PINCH. Four c-o-l-s. Four columns.

O'BRIEN. Four collars.

PINCH. Oh!

O'BRIEN. Next?

PINCH. Forty c-e-n-t. Forty centimeter guns.

O'BRIEN. Forty cents due. And a fool you're making of yourself.

PINCH (*clinging to last hope*). Very smooth, sir, but how do you explain these?

(*He holds out curling kids.*)

O'BRIEN. Oh, them? Them's um! Why—er—er—I use them in the rat business. Er—if you put 'em down a hole—um—a—um—you can always tell if there's a rat there! Give 'em to me —

PINCH. Not quite so smooth, eh, Mr. O'Brien? No, sir. I shall keep them as tangible evidence.

*(Puts them in pocket.)*

O'BRIEN. Oh, well, if you won't give 'em away, suppose we swap?

PINCH. Swap?

O'BRIEN *(taking whiskey flask out of pocket)*. This. It's up to you, mister. Either you hand over them things to me, or I hand over this flask to the lady—with your initials right on it. And remember you're a toeteetaller, too! He! He!

PINCH. Sir, I will not be intimidated. As president of the Institution for Inhibiting Inquisitive Inquirers, I refuse!

O'BRIEN. Well, I tell you what. Will *you* give 'em to the lady?

PINCH. To Miss Gull? Why?

O'BRIEN. Oh, it's just a whim of mine. I can get more if I need 'em. Will you? I'll return the flask private the minute you do.

PINCH. Why, I see no objection. Amanda would give them to me at any time. Yes, yes, I will.

*Enter MISS G. and WIDOW.*

O'BRIEN. Miss Gull, Mr. Pinch is satisfied that I am what I look to be, an honest pest exterminator, that's just completed a good job. He's willin' you should accept them things he's got as a souvenir from me.

MISS G. What things? *(PINCH holds out the kid curlers.)*  
Oh! Yes! I'd love to.

*(As she takes them, O'BRIEN passes behind PINCH and slips the flask in his pocket. He then goes over to WIDOW.*

*PINCH is standing by MISS G.)*

O'BRIEN *(to WIDOW)*. Say, what are them things?

MISS G. *(to PINCH, playfully)*. Jonas, just what did you say these things were?

WIDOW *(scornfully, to O'BRIEN)*. Curl papers, booby.

PINCH *(indulgently, to MISS G.)*. Fuses, my dear.

CURTAIN





# New Plays

## LOST—A CHAPERON

A Comedy in Three Acts

By Courtney Bruerton and W. S. Mauley

Six male, nine female characters. Costumes modern; scenery, an interior and an easy exterior. Plays a full evening. An excellent comedy with the true college atmosphere but with its scenes away from actual college life. A breezy lot of college girls in camp lose their chaperon for twenty-four hours, and are provided by a camp of college boys across the lake with plenty of excitement. The parts are all good and of almost equal opportunity, the situations are very funny and the lines full of laughs. This is sure to be liked by the young people for whom it is intended, and is strongly recommended for high-school performance. *Price, 25 cents.*

### CHARACTERS

GEORGE HIGGINS, <i>a Tuft's A. B.</i>	Ernest S. Swenson
JACK ABBOTT, } <i>Tuft's sub-freshmen, camp-</i>	Stanley M. Brown
FRED LAWTON, } <i>ing with Higgins</i>	Arthur J. Anderson
RAYMOND FITZHENRY, <i>a Harvard student</i>	Arthur T. Hale
DICK NORTON, } <i>off-hill engineers</i>	Ernest A. Larrabee
TOM CROSBY, }	Ferdinand Bryham
MARJORIE TYNDALL, <i>George's cousin; a Smith girl</i>	Helen J. Martin
ALICE BENNETT, }	Dorothy F. Entwistle
AGNES ARABELLA BATES, }	Edith H. Bradford
RUTH FRENCH, }	Marjorie L. Henry
BLANCHE WESTCOTT, }	Beatrice L. Davis
MRS. HIGGINS, <i>the chaperon. George's mother</i>	Effie M. Ritchie
MRS. SPARROW, <i>a farmer's wife. (Not in the original cast.)</i>	
LIZZIE, }	
MANDY, } <i>her daughters.</i>	

### SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—The Girls' Camp at Sherwood, 7 A. M.

ACT II.—The Fellows' Camp at Sherwood, 8 A. M.

ACT III.—Same as Act I, 10 A. M.

## A BRIDE FROM HOME

A Vaudeville Sketch in One Act

By Willis Steell

Two male, two female characters. Costumes modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. A capital sketch of Hebrew life and character, combining good comedy with genuine pathos. Moves very swiftly and is very effective. Can be strongly recommended for either vaudeville use or for amateur theatricals. *Price, 15 cents.*

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## New Entertainments

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### TAKING THE CENSUS IN BINGVILLE

An Entertainment in One Act

*By Jessie A. Kelly*

Fourteen males, eight females. Costumes, modern; scenery, unimportant. Plays an hour and a half. One of the always popular go-as-you-please entertainments; just a lot of laughs strung on a very slender wire of story. Full of eccentric character bits and chances for local hits. A sure success for the laughter-loving. Recommended for church societies or intimate communities.

*Price, 25 cents*

#### CHARACTERS

CENSUS TAKER.

ROSY GRADY, *an Irish maid.*

PATRICK MALONE, *a policeman who didn't want to be examined.*

BILL WATT, *not so bright, but still gets ahead of them all.*

MR. HARDER, *chauffeur.*

MR. KNOTT, *aeronaut.*

MR. STONE, *farmer who has rheumatiz.*

MRS. JONES, *a much married woman.*

MR. SALOON, *a barber who is "Henglish."*

DR. DUNCAN.

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